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ABSTRACT

This document, the fourth in a series on diversity in the classroom, supports the belief that challenges faced by teachers working with diverse students can only be met through teacher practices that increase levels of positive teacher-student interaction and that create, in each student, effective social and problem solving skills. Section 1, "Prevention," focuses on Planning Proactively; Principles, Procedures; and Rules; Guidelines for Developing Democratic and Effective Rules; Developing Logical Consequences; Working with Students to Prevent Behavioral Problems; Building a Positive and Caring Classroom Climate; Using Your Classroom's Organization; Preventing Behavioral Problems; Preventing Discipline Problems--Working with Parents; and Preventing Discipline Problems--Teaching and Modeling Self-Discipline. Section 2, "Positive Action," presents Strategies for Taking Positive Action with Discipline Problems. Tips to help administrators support positive classroom environments are included. (Contains 39 references.) (SM)

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Planning Together:

Positive Classroom Environments

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Foreword

Foreword

"Diversity in the Classroom" is a series of resources prepared for educators by educators. Working with an advisory committee of educators, authors research each topic thoroughly, distilling theory into a practical resource. The documents are research-based, concise yet comprehensive, and we hope of immediate use to teachers.

Guided by the following principles, each of the seven documents in the series:

- supports a learner-centred climate conducive to transactional and transformational learning
- encourages inclusion and celebrates diversity
- promotes teacher development that accommodates children's needs
- challenges teachers to examine assumptions and beliefs
- respects and empowers all members of the learning community.

Just as the blocks of a quilt are assembled to form a larger and more complete picture, so, too, will you find that the seven documents together form a more complete picture of "Diversity in the Classroom". We invite you to explore each of the documents in the series.

Caroline Krentz
Director, SIDRU

Gwen Dueck
Director, SPDU

"Honouring Diversity in the Classroom: Challenges and Reflections" is the foundational document which provides the framework for the other documents. Each of the other six documents presents a different block of the "Diversity in the Classroom" quilt.

We hope you enjoy working with this resource and will consider the other documents in the series. Your comments and suggestions are always appreciated.

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This document comes to its present form with the thoughts and ideas of many . . .

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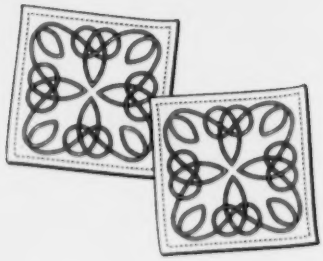

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Introduction

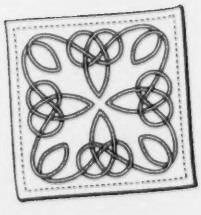
Introduction

Ask any seasoned school teacher to reflect back over his or her career and you're likely to hear something similar to the following: "Society, parents, and the needs of children have changed dramatically. When I started teaching 25 years ago, the challenges I face today would have, then, been almost unimaginable."

There is increasing evidence that teachers have legitimate concerns. Indeed, the challenges facing contemporary teachers appear considerable, and there is good reason to believe that the social milieu of contemporary students may be the source of much dysfunctional student behaviour, resulting in increasing incidences of teacher stress and burnout. What has also become apparent is the concern that a number of today's students often do not bring to school many of the social, emotional, and cognitive skills necessary to participate in the learning process (Cambone, 1994).

Clearly, teaching today requires courage; the courage to help students learn to behave appropriately and to develop the skills and attitudes to do well regardless of the stress and turmoil they may experience outside the classroom (Horne, Draper, & Sayger, 1994). Today, as never before, teachers need to focus on how they can make positive contributions to students' lives despite the family problems which may be present (Morse, 1994).

If teachers are to meet the challenges of a diverse classroom and reduce the levels of teacher and student stress, then more proactive and preventative strategies need to be employed in classroom management and student discipline. Furthermore, if they are going to make long-standing inroads into behavioural problems, teachers must realize that they can be a profound and positive influence upon students and that they themselves can resolve many of the



challenges they face without large amounts of outside assistance (Pierce, 1994; Morse, 1994).

This document supports the belief that these challenges can only be met through teacher practices which increase the level of positive teacher-student interaction and those which create, in each student, effective social and problem-solving skills. What is required is that teachers move from practices which attempt to police and control student behaviour to those which help create more self-directed and positive behaviours.

Objectives

Accordingly, with reference to classroom management and student discipline, the objectives of this document are:

- To encourage teachers to develop and to employ positive and democratic practices for improving student behaviour.
- To assist teachers in the development of proactive strategies for preventing and dealing with classroom management and student discipline problems.
- To provide teachers with the opportunity to assess and challenge their current beliefs and practices, through an encouragement of personal reflection.
- To encourage teachers to become proactive in-class problem solvers who can anticipate and resolve many of the challenges they face in dealing with difficult-to-teach students.

The document is divided into two main sections: prevention and positive action. Included in the document are teacher exercises, scenarios, and examples to assist teachers in personal reflection and in the development of new skills and strategies. A final section adds recommendations for administrators.

Positive Classroom Management and Student Discipline —

Why Are They Important For Both Students and Teachers?

"Planning to manage behaviour and to teach discipline is every bit as important to teaching and learning as planning to teach reading, chemistry, or art" (McQueen, 1992, p. 191).

"All teachers — elementary, middle years and secondary, experienced or inexperienced — face discipline challenges" (Albert, 1989).

"Even in the best run classrooms, discipline problems are likely to occur from time to time" (Osborne, 1994).

- Positive methods of discipline play an important role in the development of student self-concept, the ability to take personal responsibility for one's actions, the way children learn to communicate with others, and how they learn to work cooperatively with others (Curwin and Mendler, 1988, p.241).
- Effective classroom management produces increased levels of student achievement (Brophy and Good, 1984; MSBE, 1990).
- Both students and teachers function more productively in a safe and cooperative environment. When people are fearful, their abilities to learn and to teach are adversely affected (Curwin and Mendler, 1988).
- The leading cause of teacher burnout is the tiring and exhausting effects of dysfunctional student behaviour (Curwin and Mendler, 1988; Lasley, 1989).
- Most Gallup polls taken about schools in the last decade have rated discipline at or near the top of the public's concern (Curwin and Mendler, 1988). Similar concerns have been expressed by teachers (Clapp, 1989; Reed, 1991).

Without a rational plan for student discipline and classroom management, a teacher's attempts at creativity and efficacy in the classroom may not be possible.

Classroom Management and Student Discipline —

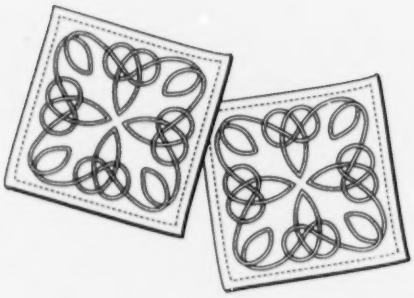
Is There a Difference?

While the terms classroom management and discipline are often used interchangeably, they represent somewhat different concepts.

"Classroom management is not simply a matter of dealing with mis-behaviour. Instead, effective management means gaining students' cooperation and promoting their involvement in educational activities" (Weinstein and Mignano, 1993, p.28).

Classroom management is an all-inclusive term referring to all elements of the classroom and to the orchestrating by the teacher of the entire learning environment. Clearly, the components of classroom management such as seating plans, teaching strategies, and classroom procedures, influence student behaviour.

While **student discipline** is a portion of the plan for classroom management, it refers "to a broad range of teacher and student behaviours aimed at enabling students to behave in appropriate ways" (McQueen, 1992, p.6). Hence, student discipline may be viewed as a subset of a plan for effective classroom management.



Diversity in the Classroom and Teacher Fairness

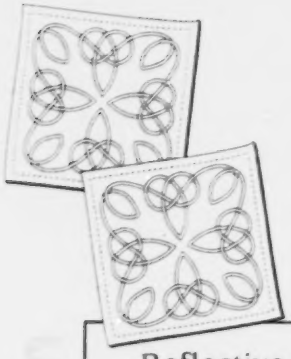
For some students, school will be the first social system they experience outside the family. Therefore, it is important that teachers assist students in the development of positive social skills and teach them to respect individual student differences. To accomplish this, teachers need to employ instructional, counselling, and management strategies, and model those positive personal behaviours which emphasize a sense of equality, a sense of caring, and a sense of fairness.

"It is not enough for a teacher to feel that he or she is a caring professional. The task is to communicate our caring to the student so that he or she feels cared about" (Morse, 1994, p.134).

Students are not taught solely by teaching strategies and lesson plans; they are taught by people. Prejudice affects all persons, flares up when we are frustrated, tired, or angry, and results in negative interactions with students. Negative interactions produce discipline problems. Accordingly, effective teachers will reflect upon their own prejudices, their fairness with reference to rules, and their interactions with students. Good teachers examine their actions analytically and know that students dislike, challenge, and are often disruptive with teachers whom they perceive as being unfair.

Teachers who are viewed by students as being fair and student centered are frequently given a greater margin of tolerance by both parents and students.

Reflection on Fairness



Reflect upon each of the questions below. If the answer is "yes" or "sometimes" to any of these questions, ask yourself, "How could I overcome these unfair treatments?" or "How might I begin to interact more positively with my students?"

Reflection

Reflective Questions on Fairness "TO WHAT DEGREE..."	YES	NO	SOMETIMES
Are the classroom's rules "ours" or "mine"? Do these rules serve the needs of students to learn or do they serve only my need to control?			
Do I apply rules, warnings, or evaluative standards unjustly or with partiality or bias?			
Do I allow some students, but not others, to ignore some rules, warnings, or standards?			
Do I go after the "wrong" student because the "right one" is more difficult for me to deal with, and confronting this student frightens me more or takes more work?			
Do I overreact because of my own personal feelings and not because of the disruption of the learning environment?			
Do I frequently nag at students or use negative comments such as, "Didn't I tell you before to...?"			
Do I punish the whole class because of one or a few students, and to show the other students my power?			
Do I give a consequence or punishment that doesn't fit the crime?			
Do I apply rules, warnings, consequences, or standards without knowing or without having thought through the rationale?			
Do I judge a student only on his past history, physical appearance, gender, race, culture, or based upon the leftover anger from his/her behaviour of yesterday?			
Do I use or develop rules I do not believe in?			
Does my preference for a certain type of person, gender, or race cause me to treat students differently?			
Adapted from Seeman, 1994, p.243			

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Becoming Congruent and Following Through

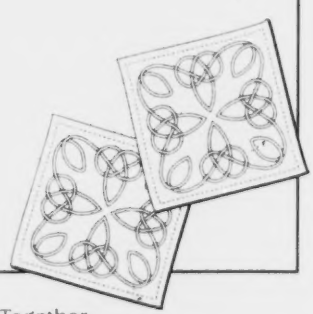
A discipline technique is only as effective as students see and feel that it is an internalized and credible part of the teacher. Therefore, being congruent, knowing what you believe and following through consistently with what you believe, is the prerequisite skill for all other skills in preventing discipline problems.

Congruence also explains why one teacher can frequently not solve another teacher's discipline problem with, "Just do as I do," advice. In short, you can't profess to be what you're not; incongruence, which leads to inconsistency, is easily discerned by students. Incongruence is what kids call being "phony" and often explains why teachers do not follow through or back up what they say. No system of classroom discipline can be effective without the teacher believing in and modelling the principles of the particular discipline model(s) he or she is employing.

Scenario

Two teachers have the same amount of training and the same number of years of experience. Both have attended the same inservices on student discipline. In Ms. Chen's class the students heed her when she reminds them, "Tom, you know our rule; if you choose to speak out again without raising your hand, there will be a consequence."

But in Mr. Taylor's class, when he responds to a "calling out" student with virtually the same response as Ms. Chen's, the student and the others in the class smile and laugh under their breath. Seeman (1994) suggests that there is a reason for the difference in student response. It is because the students believe and know that Ms. Chen is behind what she says, and will follow through with a fair consequence.



Incongruence in the delivery of a lesson is also the source of discipline problems. A teacher's enthusiasm for the subject, for teaching, and for caring about students comes from the heart and is easily discerned by students; incongruent teachers say what they think will look or sound good.

Students are not likely to be motivated unless the teacher is motivated. Furthermore, students often do not care for incongruent

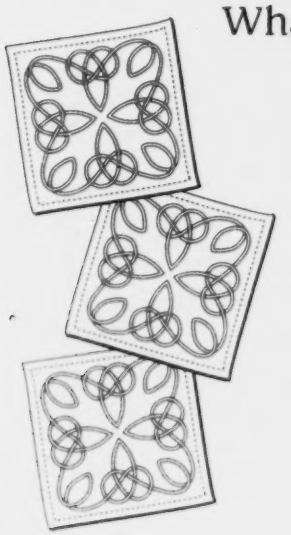
"There is little difference in effective classroom management among teachers who are democratic, authoritarian or moderate. What does make a difference is knowing who you are and allowing yourself to be what you are. Many classroom discipline problems occur because of double messages that the teacher gives the students" (Curwin and Mendler, 1988, p. 35).

teachers, and the students' dislike or indifference often may motivate them toward misbehaviour, particularly if they feel the teacher has been unfair.

Being congruent and coming from the heart earns students' respect, motivates them, and prevents discipline problems.

Avoiding Miscalls —

What Is and What Is Not a Discipline Problem?



A great problem concerning student discipline is that, frequently, no two teachers can agree as to what student behaviour constitutes a discipline problem (Seeman, 1994). Furthermore, the teacher may be unclear about what a discipline problem is.

Many of today's students face personal and educational problems. What is essential is that teachers do not turn these student problems into discipline problems. To prevent teachers labelling or miscalling a student problem as a behavioural problem, Seeman (1994) has created this definition of a discipline problem:

- Behaviour that disrupts or is potentially disruptive to the learning of the rest of the class, not just the learning of the disruptor.

- Behaviour that disrupts the role responsibilities of the teacher, not just the personal feelings of the teacher.

When a teacher is clear about what is and what is not a discipline problem, the teacher avoids becoming the source of the problem through incorrectly miscalling a student's motivation, evaluation, or counselling problem or a personal affront to the teacher's person and not to the teacher's role, as a discipline problem.

Scenario

It is 9:35 on Monday morning and during the Grade 7 language arts class, Sarah has her head on her desk and has her book opened to the wrong page. Is the situation a discipline problem? One teacher might consider it as such, but another might see it as "no big deal." In addition, the teacher who views it as a discipline problem on Monday morning may not see it as a problem on Friday afternoon. This equivocation sends students mixed messages, leads to double standards, and results in students branding the teacher as being inconsistent or unfair. Worse yet, miscalling a situation often results in the escalation of the incident into increasing hostility. To prevent this, teachers need a clear definition of what is and what is not a discipline problem.

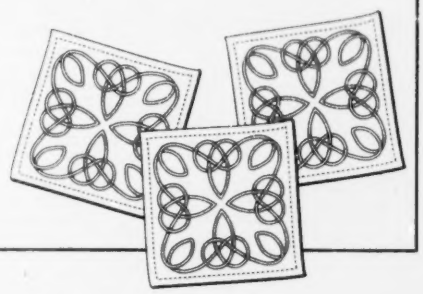
Let's examine two different approaches to dealing with Sarah.

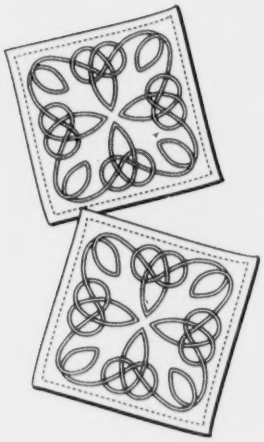
Example One:

Mr. Mercer (loudly): "Sarah, get your head up off your desk and get back to work!" Sarah: "I wasn't bothering anybody; I was just resting. What are you getting on my case for?" With this exchange between teacher and student, the whole classroom has been disrupted, is watching, and, now, the teacher does have a discipline problem! (In fact, maybe the most disruptive behaviour was the teacher's.)

Example Two:

Noticing Sarah with her head resting on her desk, Mr. Mercer stops and thinks. He knows he does not have to make a hasty decision in this situation. He approaches Sarah's desk and asks, "Are you okay?" Sarah lifts her face and replies, "Yah, I guess so, I . . ." Mr. Mercer views Sarah's face, and he sees she is troubled. "Let's talk after class," he replies quietly. Sarah nods and goes back to her work. A confrontation has been avoided by the teacher not making a hasty miscall, and Mr. Mercer is now provided with the opportunity to become an active listener to Sarah's concerns.





Reflection on Discipline Problems and Teacher Miscalls

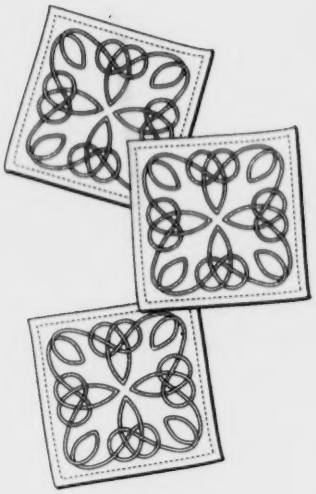
The purpose of this exercise is to help you distinguish between a discipline problem and a teacher miscall. In the box provided at the right of each scenario, indicate whether the situation is a behavioural problem or a miscall. Try to explain the rationale for each of your judgements. The types of miscalls have been provided for you. An answer key and debriefing follows the scenarios.

1. Student guidance and counselling problem (miscall)
2. Education problem — student motivation difficulty or the situation needs grade or credit evaluation (miscall)
3. Personal affront to you as a person but not to your role responsibilities as a teacher (miscall)
4. Discipline problem

Reflection

Classroom Incident	1, 2, 3, or 4?
1. A student in the first seat, first row, is pretending to take notes while really looking at a magazine.	
2. A student comes to class with neither pen nor pencil and proceeds to ask other students to borrow one.	
3. Even before you have finished formulating the question to the class, a student calls out the answer.	
4. A student grimaces, as an aside, to show boredom with your lesson.	
5. You call on a student whose hand is raised. The student responds, "I find this stuff boring!"	
6. You point to a sentence on the blackboard. Instead of looking at the board, a student shakes his/her head to show irritation and looks out the window.	
7. During the lesson, you notice that a student has written on the corner of his/her notes, "This class sucks!"	
8. A student who is responding to your question begins to slouch when answering.	

Source: Seeman, 1994, pp. 50,81,82



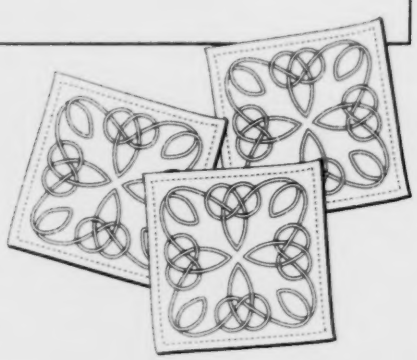
Debriefing and Answers

1. Is the person who is reading the magazine disturbing the rest of the class or your role as a teacher? If the answer is no, this is not a discipline problem. It may be an education problem or a guidance problem, but it is not a discipline problem.
2. If the student asks others for a pen or pencil and interrupts these persons' learning, it is a discipline problem.
3. This is clearly a discipline problem. The learning of others and your role responsibility have been disrupted.
4. Calling this a discipline problem would be a miscall. If the grimace were to disrupt the learning of the class, this would be different. However, if no one sees this except you, your person may have been disrupted but not your role responsibility. This is an education problem and not a discipline problem.
5. What is the reaction of the rest of the class? How do you feel personally? This is potentially an education or guidance problem and, unless other students' learning is interrupted, this may not be a discipline problem.
6. Are other students disrupted? Likely not. Hence, this may be an education or guidance problem but not a discipline problem.
7. If the learning of the class is not disrupted and your role responsibility as teacher has not been disturbed, this may be an education or guidance and counselling problem. In all likelihood, this is a personal affront to you as a person, but it may not be a discipline problem. Be careful not to react in such a way as to turn it into one.
8. This is not a discipline problem. It may be a personal affront to you, but it is not a discipline problem.

Reflection

Reflect back on a situation of teacher-student conflict in which you were involved. How did you handle the conflict? Did the conflict have its origin in a student discipline problem or in a teacher miscall? If the conflict resulted from a miscall, what was the student's response? How would you respond next time?

Incident
Your Response To Incident:
Student's Response To Incident:
Your Reflective Response:



Prevention

Prevention

Planning Proactively to Prevent Student Discipline Problems

The diverse classroom produces the potential for a wide range of student behaviours. To deal with these behaviours and to make a positive difference takes a large and creative repertoire of ideas and strategies. Hence, an eclectic approach to classroom management and student discipline is usually best.

In developing a discipline plan, prevention is far more important than intervention.

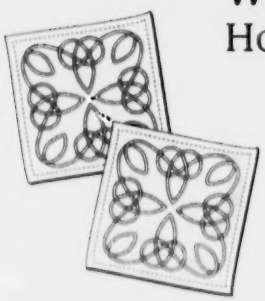
A proactive plan for classroom management and student discipline is focused on producing positive student behaviours and maximizing student learning. These behaviours can be developed when teachers:

Effective teachers plan to prevent student discipline problems before they occur. It is estimated that proactive classroom management techniques can prevent 75 percent of disruptive student behaviours (Jones and Jones, 1986).

- develop the classroom's rules around democratic and caring principles
- allow students to have meaningful input into rules, procedures, and consequences for misbehaviour
- negotiate a social contract between the teacher and students
- foster a positive and caring classroom climate that supports all students
- create an orderly classroom environment
- work cooperatively with parents
- maximize positive interactions between the teacher and students and focus on positive student behaviours

Principles, Procedures, and Rules —

What Are They and How Do They Differ?



Principles are broad statements of teacher values which are the underpinnings of the classroom's climate and form the basis for the setting of rules. Because they are broad statements, they are general guidelines which assist in developing long-term behavioural changes. Examples of principles include: Students are asked to respect others' property. "Please, be courteous to everyone."

The reflective teacher will consider the merits of including the students in developing some or all of the classroom's rules.

Procedures are sets of directions outlining classroom routines which enable the teacher to efficiently conduct the day-to-day business of the classroom. Effective classroom procedures characterize a teacher's clear expectations and create predictability in the student environment. This reduces student stress which is often linked to misbehaviour (Alberta Education, 1986). Examples of procedures include: how to hand in assignments, how to ask for help, dismissal, who goes first. Depending on the age of the children, it may be wise for the teacher to post important procedures and to practice these with the students. Many teachers have found assessing students' knowledge of procedures, on an on-going basis, to be helpful in maintaining the smooth functioning of the classroom.

"The number one problem in the classroom is not discipline; it is the lack of procedures and routines" (Wong & Wong, 1991, p.171).

What do I want students in my classroom to model? (principles).

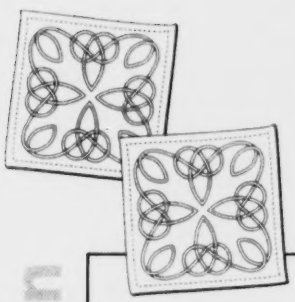
This is how we will . . . (procedures).

Everyone will . . . (rules).

Rules are a set of agreed upon standards of behaviour developed to delineate the limits of student behaviour. Rules define what is and what is not acceptable in the classroom and in the school. Rules provide guidelines to help us function in a complicated society — the classroom (Sprick, 1981). Rules address specific student behaviours. For example: People are not for hitting; Please keep your hands and feet to yourself. The reflective teacher will consider the merits of including the students in developing some or all of the classroom's rules.

Reflection on Rules

In the space provided, write down each of your classroom's rules. Read the guidelines for developing democratic and effective rules. According to the guidelines, and with five being "clear, fair, and democratic," rate each of your classroom's rules on a scale of one through five.



After you have read the guidelines and rated each of the rules, are there any you might change? Any students might change? Which ones? Why? How many of the classroom's rules reflect student input?

Reflection

Our Classroom's Rules

Rule	Rating	Strengths	Suggested Improvements

A new teacher comes to you for advice in setting classroom rules. What advice would you give him/her?

Guidelines for Developing Democratic and Effective Rules

The greater the degree of student participation in the making of rules, the greater may be their ownership and the fewer rules they may break.

- Involve the students in the development of some or all of the rules. When children are allowed to make decisions, they often make the same rules that adults would make. They respect the rules that they themselves make much more than the same rules imposed by adults (Kamii and Joseph, 1989, pp. 51-52).

- Keep the rules positive. For example: Instead of, "Don't be late;" use, "Please, be on time; class begins at 8:55."

- Rules should be written and developed in terms of specific student behaviours. Make sure the rule is not ambiguous but clearly understandable. For example:

  Vague rule: Be punctual.

  Better rule: All students are to be in their desks and have their work materials ready to go at 8:55 a.m.

- Keep the number of rules to a minimum. The larger the number of rules, the more difficult they may be to remember.

- Unless you firmly believe in the rules, will enforce them, and follow through with a consequence, do not use another classroom's rules.

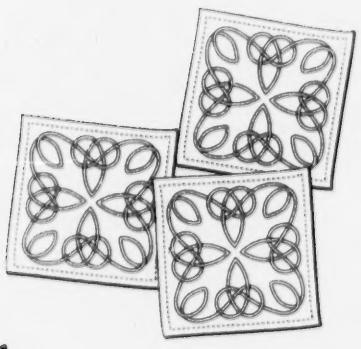
- Model the classroom's rules. All students, but especially middle years students, respond negatively to double standards. If you break a rule, apologize. Students respect teacher fairness.

- Post the rules and give a written copy to students, to students' parents, and to your administrator. Be sure the administrator will support these rules.

"Rules can be orders, or they can be responsibilities. They are orders if you autocratically impose them on the class. They are responsibilities if the class agrees that they are fair rules and are essential for the running of the class" (Wong & Wong, 1991, p.151).

Reinforce the rules positively. Catch a student being good and following the rule. Acknowledge this behaviour. When students learn that positive consequences occur when they follow rules, they are more likely to continue doing this.

- Make the rules flexible. Hard and fast rules sometimes create more difficulties than they prevent. For example: Assignments are never accepted late. Can you see the potential problem with this rule?
- Make the rules reasonable and fair. A good check for any rule is to ask: "Is it reasonable for students to meet this expectation?"
- Let students know why each rule is important and necessary.
- Teach the students the rules and check their understanding of not only the rules but the principles from which the rules were formed. Some teachers choose to have the students role play the rules in order to show why they are important.
- Ensure that each rule treats all students fairly and does not discriminate against race, gender, culture, or ability.
- Provide reasonable rewards and privileges to students or to the class when they consistently obey the rules.
- Ensure that each broken rule is followed by an immediate and agreed upon consequence.



Developing Logical Consequences or Choices and Not Punishments

"Punishment works only if the teacher is around to enforce the consequences. Punishment will not make long-lasting changes in student behaviours; reinforcement used effectively will. In addition, positive reinforcement fosters positive feelings and increases the likelihood of a child developing a healthier self-image and a more positive attitude toward teachers and school" (Sprick, 1981, p.2).

"Consequences are taken more seriously by students when they are imposed within the context of a positive environment" (Sprick, 1985, p.94).

Establishing both positive and negative consequences for students' behaviour is a key component of any discipline plan. Consequences not only provide for student accountability, but create an opportunity for students to choose positive types of behaviour. Accordingly, many teachers take two preventative courses of action.

1. **Positive consequences** are developed to encourage student compliance to rules. For example, if there are only a few rule infractions in a week, the individuals in the class may use the last period on Friday for doing homework, using computers, playing educational games, reading, or doing special projects.

2. **Proactive teachers** include students in the development of consequences for good and bad behaviours. Again, increasing student ownership for both rules and consequences is linked to improved student behaviour.

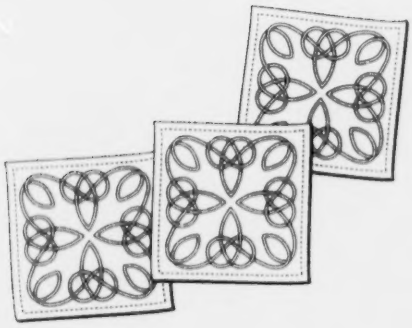
In the establishment of consequences for student misbehaviour, Curwin and Mendler (1988) suggest that consequences are most effective when they:

- Are clear, specific, and predictable.
- Provide a wide range of alternative actions for the teacher which are not hierarchical i.e. lockstep.
- Are related directly to the rule broken.
- Are reasonable, natural and/or logical, and protect the student's dignity.

- Are not seen by the students as being unfair or a punishment. For example:

  Classroom Rule: Before speaking, please raise your hand and wait to be acknowledged by the teacher.

  - *Logical Consequence: What you say will not be acknowledged by the teacher or you must wait 5 minutes before speaking.*
  - *Punishment: Sit in the hall for the entire period or 40 minute detention to be served after school.*



How to Deliver Consequences and Choices Effectively

- After a discipline problem has occurred, choose the best consequence for the situation and implement it immediately. In the same fashion, a misbehaving student who later follows a rule should be immediately and positively reinforced.

- Keep the intervention short. Lecturing the student is potentially harmful. Simply state the rule and the consequence. This avoids creating student anger, escalating the problem, and allowing misbehaving students to be the centre of attention. For example: "Tom, please remember our rule about speaking out; your talking out is disruptive. Please see me at the end of class. Now, class, please look at problem three."

- When you deliver the consequence, close the physical distance between you and the student, but do not position yourself in a threatening manner.

- Providing there is not a cultural reason to prevent you from doing such, make direct eye contact with the student when you deliver the consequence.

- Deliver the consequence in a soft but firm voice and without anger. Yelling serves only to escalate the problem. Ensure that your body language does not display anger or hostility.

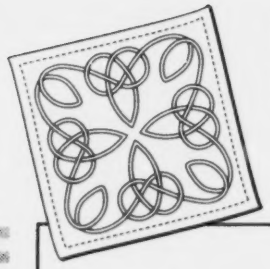
- Treat the student with respect. Never embarrass the student in front of his or her peers and never use sarcasm or ridicule.

- Do not accept student's excuses, attempts to bargain, or whining.

Adapted From: Curwin and Mendler, 1988, pp.95-98

What is required is not simply changing how the student behaves. We must seek to change how the student wants to behave.

"Some students derive a great sense of power from their ability to make adults angry. In working with this type of student, an emotional response from the teacher serves as a powerful reinforcer of inappropriate behaviour. Behaviours that are not positively reinforced will tend to happen less often in the future. When the teacher calmly informs the student of the consequence it communicates that the misbehaviour has no power to affect the teacher" (Sprick and Nolet, 1991, pp.529-530).



Reflection on Fair and Logical Consequences

Reflection

For each of your classroom's rules, develop four or five effective consequences which meet the suggestions on pages 21 and 22 of this document.

Use students to help develop both positive and negative consequences for some or all classroom rules.

Depending on the ages and grade level of the students, have your students develop one or two classroom rules for you and two or three fair consequences. For example:

> ***Student Rule for Teacher:*** Unless there is an emergency or a discipline problem, the teacher will model our classroom's rule: Allow others to finish speaking before interrupting.
>
> ***Student Consequences for Teacher***
>
> - Polite student reminder to teacher.
> - Students receive final 10 minutes of period for any homework, reading, or for a class discussion. (Is this a logical and fair consequence?)
> - Apology by teacher.

Discuss with students which consequences are most and least fair. Ask the students to give reasons for their comments.

Ground rule: If the proposed student change is not what you believe to be in the best interest of all students, you reserve the right not to change the consequence.

Working With Students to Prevent Behavioural Problems —

The Development of a Social Contract Among the Teacher and The Students

A **social contract** is the democratic development, by both the teacher and students, of the classroom's rules and of the consequences for student behaviour. The social contract is built upon the assumption that students will follow a discipline plan's rules and consequences more readily if they have had some say in its development. In essence, "the power of the social contract resides in the process of democratic student empowerment and not in the rules and consequences" (Curwin and Mendler, 1988).

The potential benefits of the social contract . . .

- Students are empowered by assisting in the decision-making process.
- Teacher expectations and rules are clarified.
- Logical, predictable, and reasonable consequences are developed as opposed to punishments.
- Flexibility is ensured. Changes can be made in the contract as the need arises.
- Teacher decisions can be made based on individual and diverse student needs (i.e., "the fair but not always equal" principle).
- The dignity of both the student and the teacher are maintained.
- Communication is increased among all stakeholders: students, teachers, administrators, and parents.

Source: Curwin and Mendler, 1988, pp.47-48.

Examples:

1st Grade Social Contract

Classroom Rule: We will sit together quietly on the rug for storytime. There will be no moving around once we sit.

Consequences — Teacher Choices:

- Teacher reminder.
- Gentle verbal or nonverbal reprimand.
- Teacher demonstrates correct behaviour.
- Teacher places you on the rug.
- You must sit at your desk.
- Timeout in private area inside or outside of the classroom.

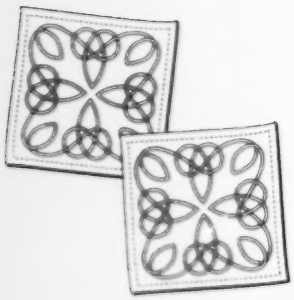
Grade 10 English Class Social Contract

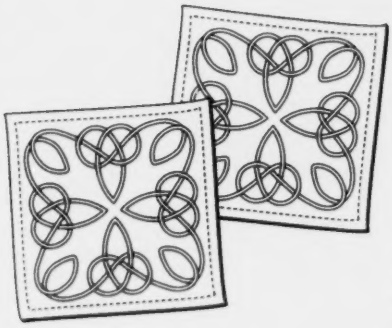
Classroom Rule: At the tone, students will be in their seats and have their books and materials ready to go.

Consequences — Teacher Choices:

- Teacher reminder of classroom rule.
- Gentle verbal or nonverbal reprimand.
- Wasted time will be made up after school.
- A meeting will be held after school to discuss ways students can get to class on time.
- For each week of no tardiness, the students will receive 20 minutes of free time and may select a special activity from the agreed upon list.

What do you think of these consequences?





Building a Positive and Caring Classroom Climate

Proactive teachers know that not all students bring into the classroom the necessary social and problem-solving skills which allow them to deal effectively with problem situations. Effective teachers know that, frequently, these skills must be taught and modelled by the teacher.

When teachers create a caring and supportive classroom climate for all students, they head off many of the classroom's potential discipline problems. Students are less likely to be disruptive for people whom they respect, know are genuinely interested in them, and view as being genuine. Thus, a teacher's attitude toward students with behavioural problems is critical (Horne, Draper, & Sayger, 1994). The suggestions which follow may be rendered ineffective if a teacher cannot summon some positive feelings for a student.

All teachers must work to avoid the great risk in education — the risk of having our schools and classrooms become an "affective desert" (George, 1986).

"A democratic atmosphere requires a specific relationship as a basis for cooperation" (Dreikurs and Cassel, 1972, p.19).

Suggestions for Creating a Caring and Supportive Classroom Climate

- **Become an active listener** to the problems and concerns of your students. Children thrive on being heard. An active listener assists the student to state precisely how he/she is feeling and to state exactly what is bothering her/him. Reflecting on what is said, rather than advising or lecturing, are other characteristics of effective listeners.

  ✦ **Recommended teacher references**: Gordon (1975) relates sound advice about using active listening to handle resistance and assisting students to become autonomous and self-reliant. Ginott (1972) gives excellent information on how teachers respond to children and how teachers can become more effective listeners.

- Make your classroom **a safe place** for all students. Become an advocate for the protection of students against all forms of bullying and violence.
- **Wipe the slate clean** for each student. Do not judge students on their past behaviours. Many students welcome the opportunity to start over.
- Place a "**Your Attitude Is Showing**" box into your classroom or school. Each week draw a few names, award prizes, and give public recognition to those students who have demonstrated positive behaviours or helpful actions.

The interactions a student has with the teacher can have a powerful influence on the development of student self-concept. Self-concept is directly related to a student's ability to learn (Sprick, 1981).

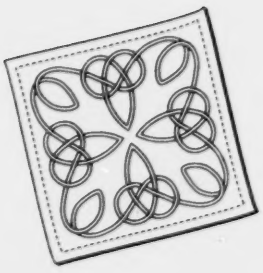
- Place a suggestion or questions to be answered box in the classroom and be prepared to honestly **discuss the students' concerns**. Remember to establish a fairness guideline such as: "No question will be read or discussed which is injurious or unfair to others."

The balance between positive and negative interactions will set the climate of the classroom.

- **Teaching and counselling go hand in hand**. The adage rings true: "Until they know how much you care, they won't care how much you know." Do not dodge life crisis concerns of students such as peer pressure, death and dying, divorce and separation, pregnancy and drug use. These are important concerns of students and sources of considerable student stress. If you do not feel comfortable discussing these topics, seek the help of outside professionals. Remember that your students may require everyday guidance and counselling.

Rather than intimidation, effective teachers rely on creating positive interactions.

- **Teach your students how to manage stress** and develop a healthy life style i.e. relaxing, eating healthy foods, getting enough rest, and discussing problems with a trusted person.
- **Model a positive attitude** and seek to increase the number of positive interactions in your classroom. React positively to and praise good behaviour.
- Teach your students how to **problem solve, resolve conflict, and manage anger**. Model the skills you teach.



✦ **Recommended teacher references**: Shaw (1992) and Eggert (1994).

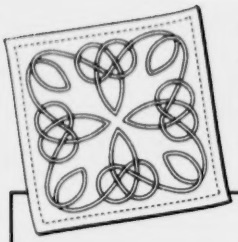
- Hold regular **classroom meetings** and encourage students to solve their own problems cooperatively.
- Encourage students to write or carry on a dialogue with you through a **personal journal**. This develops trust, and, frequently, a student-teacher bonding results.
- Establish a **peer counselling** program in your school.
- **Identify outside of school activities** in which your students are interested or have succeeded. Use these as a bridge or springboard to develop, improve, or cement relationships.

"Caring is the experience so desperately needed, especially by troubled children and those at risk, and caring is a relatively neglected aspect of the teaching matrix" (Morse, 1994, p.132).

- **Learn about your students'** learning styles, cultures, home lives, and friends. The more a teacher understands a student's frame of reference, the greater insight he/she may have in understanding student behaviour.

"Research indicates that there is a three-to-one ratio of negative to positive interactions in the average elementary classroom. We need to reverse this trend which produces negative student behaviour and create, in all classrooms and for all children, three positives for every negative interaction" (Sprick, 1981, pp.1-2).

- **Admit to mistakes** you make and apologize for them. For example: "Class, I made a mistake when I threatened you with a three-week detention. I was angry. Let's work together to develop more reasonable consequences for talking back." Student comment: "That was awesome. Mrs. Carnochan apologized to us; she really does believe in what she asks us to do!"
- Do not be afraid to **tell your students how you feel** today. "Class, did you ever have one of those days when...?"
- Look for ways to **have some fun** with the students and employ a good sense of humour.
- The development of a **solid student-teacher relationship** does not start or end at the classroom door. Therefore, develop both in class and out-of-class activities which make students feel special and want to be part of the class. The more you do outside of the classroom with students, the fewer problems you are likely to have inside of the classroom.



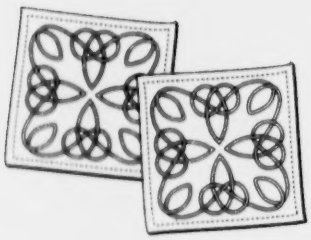
Reflection on Classroom Climate

Reflection

List at least five ideas you use to make your classroom a caring and positive community. What are three new things you could do to create a more caring and supportive environment?

What are some of the things which occur in your classroom or school which detract from the establishment of a caring environment? Consider the question from both the students' and your perspectives. Develop action plans to remove the detractors.

Reflect upon each of your classes. Identify the most unreachable students. Beside each student's name, list one positive thing about the student and two new methods you could use to draw that person into the class or the school's programs.



Using Your Classroom's Organization To Prevent Discipline Problems

Teachers deemed to be more effective have themselves, their materials, and their classrooms organized and ready (Kounin, 1970). By creating an organized environment, effective teachers prevent many discipline problems from occurring.

"Environments push us into specific psychological sets; they tell us the range and kinds of behaviour appropriate for where we are. The classroom environment can, in a way, tell students to care or not care about their behaviour or even suggest disruptive behaviour" (Seeman, 1994, p.123).

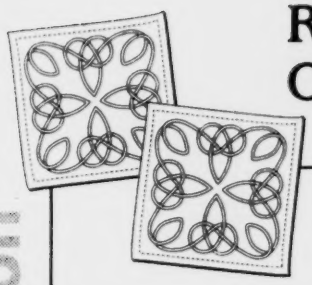
"Evidence suggests that a highly structured, ordered, and predictable environment provokes the greatest change in students with a behaviour disorder" (Weber, 1994, p.64).

"The most powerful tool for changing behaviour will come from increasing positive interactions for appropriate behaviour" (Sprick, 1985, p.93).

Suggestions for Arranging Your Classroom

- Encourage the students to assist you in developing learning centres and the room's arrangement.
- Especially in elementary grades, allow for a quiet work-study area which can become a retreat for discussion or reflection (Weber, 1994).
- Make sure your classroom contains some "softness" which is responsive to touch. For example: pets, couches, pillows, bean bag chairs, area rugs.
- Arrange the classroom so that students experience as little interference as possible. Separate noisy activities from quiet ones.

✦ **Recommended teacher reference**: Weinstein, C.A. & Mignano, A.J. (1993). Chapter Three offers excellent information on designing the classroom's physical environment to accommodate positive social interaction among teacher and students.

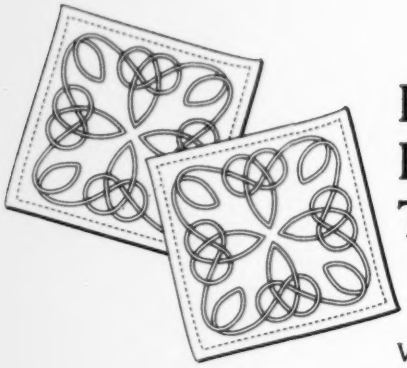


Reflection on Classroom Organization

Reflection

Imagine you are an observer entering your classroom for the first time. Make notes on the seating plan and its rationale, the classroom's rules, the procedures and assignments, the displays of student work, the configuration of chairs and tables, the storage of materials, the walls and chalkboards, and the classroom's smell and lighting. Note strengths and areas for improvement.

Now proceed to the teacher's desk. Is there strong evidence of teacher preparation? Will the lessons involve and interest the students? Are the materials relevant to the age of the students and to their abilities? Have the materials been prepared, collated, stored neatly, and are they ready to go? Note strengths and areas for improvement.



Preventing Behavioural Problems Through Effective Teaching

While teachers spend considerable time in planning their lessons' content, they often spend less time in planning for student involvement, adapting content to meet individual needs, diversifying evaluation, and reflecting on opportunities to create positive interactions, and student motivation. When teachers plan to include these factors, they are capable of significantly reducing the frequency of behavioural problems in the classroom.

"Introducing each activity with a reminder of expectations and concluding each activity with feedback about how well those expectations were met allows teachers to calmly and assertively communicate to students how they want the classroom to run. The goal for teachers is to create the impression that each student will behave appropriately when given clear information about expectations" (Sprick and Nolet, 1991, p.522).

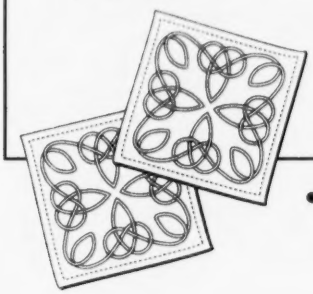
Suggestions for Preventing Behavioural Problems Through Effective Teaching

- Determine if behavioural problems are linked to learning difficulties. For example: Is the student's reading level, in relation to selected learning materials, leading to frustration and then misbehaviour?
- Create opportunities in your teaching for every child to succeed. When a student's hope of success is destroyed, discipline problems can be expected. Conversely, students motivated by success cause fewer problems.
- Put your heart into what you teach. When students sense a lack of teacher interest in the course's content, they, too, lose interest and discipline problems may occur.
- Establish effective routines "for beginning class, movements during transitions, assigning and collecting classwork and homework, arranging for makeup work for students who are absent, dealing with students who do not have necessary items, taking

attendance, dealing with late assignments, leaving the classroom, clean-up, and dismissal" (Sprick and Nolet, 1991, p.522).

Key Points

- ✓ Be clear about expectations.
- ✓ Consider learning styles.
- ✓ Create opportunities for success.
- ✓ Keep instructions simple.
- ✓ Provide an organized environment.
- ✓ Be enthusiastic!
- ✓ Outline the day.
- ✓ Have interesting activities on hand.
- ✓ Assist in goal setting.
- ✓ Introduce variety.
- ✓ Plan for engaging, active learning.
- ✓ Celebrate many "right answers" rather than rewarding only one.
- ✓ Be watchful of potential bias or prejudice.



- Deliver clear expectations to your students for evaluation, homework, procedures, schedules, and behaviour. Ensure that expectations are realistic in terms of students' abilities.
- Keep instructions simple and concise. Break larger tasks into smaller ones and provide for frequent guided practice in working with abstract concepts. Model and demonstrate techniques, processes or strategies you wish students to learn or apply. Complex tasks often produce student frustration and frustration produces behavioural problems.
- Attempt to determine each student's learning style. Know that how you learn best may not be how students and those from other cultures learn best. ✦ **Recommended teacher reference**: Guild and Garger (1985).
- Employ "withitness" and utilize scanning to note all areas of the room where students are working.
- Outline the day for students each morning. Explain the day's schedule and activities and identify any changes which are likely to occur. Predictability decreases behavioural problems.
- Prepare a list of worthwhile and curriculum-related activities to serve as filler exercises to be used if the students finish their work early. Ensure these can be done independently (Alberta Education, 1986).
- Help to set short-term and achievable goals for students who exhibit behavioural problems (Weber, 1994).
- Utilize a variety of instructional approaches. Plan interesting, appealing, and appropriate work for all students. Student boredom may lead students to pursue inappropriate behaviours (Alberta Education, 1986).

- Deliver directions in close proximity to students who exhibit behavioural problems. During transitions, be close to potential problems. Spend a few positive one-on-one seconds with students who need supervision at crucial points (i.e. after recess).
- Provide three times as much positive as negative feedback but ensure that you only reinforce students who have put forth a genuine effort.
- Provide all students with the opportunity to receive positive attention but give extra attention, time, and positive feedback to "problem" students behaving appropriately (Sprick, 1985).
- Schedule less preferred tasks before more preferred tasks and activities.
- Plan for students to learn experientially and actively. Teach students how to work cooperatively and create situations for the students to interact with you and with each other. Cooperative learning not only assists in cognitive development but in the affective dimension as well (Johnson and Johnson, 1985; Lehr, 1984; Slavin, 1981).
- Ensure that course content and use of examples or case studies respect the cultural diversity of the classroom, different genders, and the differing frames of reference of students.
- Encourage diversity in how students may respond to a problem and ensure that assessment and evaluation reflect student input and a consideration for the learning styles and cultures of the students.
- Inspect your lesson's content and its delivery for potential bias or prejudice. Model and insist upon fairness toward all genders, cultures, ethnic groups, races, and students.
- Utilize praise meaningfully, contingently, descriptively, and in a non-embarrassing manner. For example, at the middle and secondary levels, the teacher should be careful not to embarrass the student in front of peers for having done a good job.

Preventing Discipline Problems —

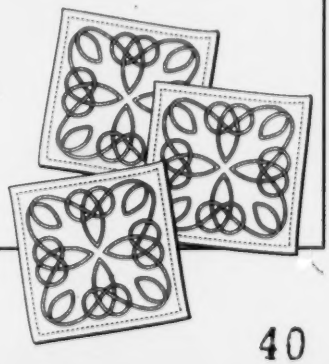
Working with Parents

A key element in the prevention of potential classroom discipline problems is the development of a strong working relationship with parents. Because of the individual needs and differing cultural backgrounds of the students in the diverse classroom, this is absolutely critical.

Scenario

Tracy was a new student in Mr. Walter's class. Violence, theft, and lying were prominent behaviours of this very troubled youth. Yet, Tracy was capable; she had potential, and Mr. Walter was willing to take a chance. Anticipating that Tracy's in-school actions were likely to generate conflict and require frequent phone calls home to Tracy's parents, Mr. Walter was determined to make a positive first contact. Overlooking telling Tracy's parents about a number of smaller infractions which had required his intervention, he contacted the parents to report the positive. The response at the other end of the line was disbelief. "My Tracy? You must have the wrong kid!" It was the first positive contact the parents had ever received. "All the same, it's true," Mr. Walter continued. "I cannot promise you that every day will be like this but let's celebrate today. We can work together on Tracy's problems tomorrow!"

A single positive move on his part had turned a potentially difficult situation at home into a supportive one. The parents were his new allies. For Mr. Walter, managing Tracy's behaviour at school was going to be easier and for Tracy, a supportive team had been formed to assist with her learning.

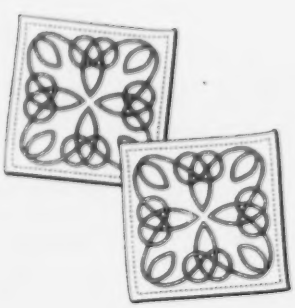


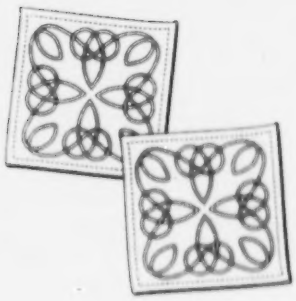
When the first contact with parents arises from a discipline problem in the classroom, it is potentially damaging to the teacher-parent relationship. Therefore, the prudent teacher will make every effort to initiate a positive first interaction with parents. Ziegler (1987) reminds teachers that when parents become involved in their children's schools, this is strongly and positively associated with improved student achievement and attitude. Furthermore, she reports that most parents, in spite of their socio-economic and educational backgrounds, can be assisted by teachers to learn how to intervene positively into their children's education.

"Neither teachers nor parents can reasonably assume that successful prevention or intervention can be carried out in only one setting. It must be a cooperative venture that integrates intervention in both school and home" (Reid & Patterson, 1991, p.735).

Tracy had a reputation which preceded her. In a similar fashion, each teacher has a reputation in the school and in the community which precedes him or her (Wong and Wong, 1991). Parents want to know that their child will be safe, secure, and cared for by a fair, competent, and caring individual. Teachers who take the time to get to know parents earn a reputation for caring and are more frequently viewed by parents as committed professionals. Clearly, when a teacher establishes meaningful two-way dialogue with parents, the teacher's margin of tolerance is expanded (Hindle, 1994). In essence, research shows clearly that close ties with parents are proven to keep parental dissent to a minimum (Ziegler, 1987).

Effective teachers take the time to get to know as many of their students' parents as possible.





An effective home-school team prevents students from playing one side off against the other.

Building The Home-School Team — Suggestions for Involving Parents

- During the first few days of school or before the school year begins, send a positive letter home to parents explaining the classroom's goals, system of evaluation, expectations for student behaviour, and proposed consequences for misbehaviour. You may also want to request permission to keep students after school so that academic and behavioural problems may be resolved immediately (Sprick, 1981).

- At the beginning of the year, invite parents to participate in a "Welcome to Grade __ Night". At this time, discuss expectations and distribute information on classroom procedures, rules, consequences, student's responsibilities, assessment and evaluation, curriculum, special class activities, etc. Some teachers also involve the parents in a few of the experiences the class will participate in during the year. For those parents who are unable to attend, telephone them and convey this information or arrange to meet with them at a later date.

- Throughout the year, create special activity or achievement nights which celebrate each student's accomplishments. Encourage all parents to attend by contacting them personally. Make the evening as informal and as interactive as possible.

- Develop a class newsletter informing parents of various classroom activities as well as classroom needs and student accomplishments.

- Encourage and find ways for parents to assist in the classroom and school. For example: driving, resource persons, locating materials.

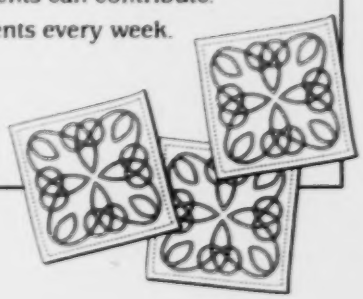
- Establish a personal goal to contact three parents per week to discuss their son's or daughter's progress and accomplishments.

A characteristic of the master teacher is one who reaches the "unreachable" student(s) and who strives to reach the "unreachable" parent(s).

- Proclaim yourself as a teacher who will listen to each and every parent. Model this by making a special attempt to accommodate and contact working or single parents or those from minority or different racial or cultural groups (Berla, Henderson, & Kerewsky, 1990).

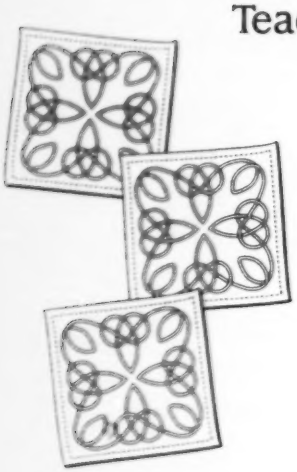
Tips . . .

- ✓ Send home positive notes.
- ✓ Invite parents in.
- ✓ Host "Celebration" events.
- ✓ Keep everyone up to date through student-created newsletters.
- ✓ Think of ways parents can contribute.
- ✓ Contact a few parents every week.
- ✓ Listen.



Preventing Discipline Problems —

Teaching and Modelling Self-Discipline



Self-discipline empowers and enables students to function academically and socially in a productive and acceptable manner. When students have learned self-control, they are aware of the consequences of their behaviours in terms of themselves and in terms of the group.

How does a teacher instill self-discipline into students? The answer may be by teaching it. McQueen (1992) offers four ways students may be taught self-discipline.

1. When teachers effectively model and demonstrate rules and exhibit positive behaviours, they teach self-discipline to students. Teacher modelling means avoiding double standards. Most students, but in particular middle years and secondary students, are quick to pick out a double standard. Teachers also encourage self-discipline when they point positively to students who are acting appropriately.

2. Having students rehearse the classroom's rules and procedures encourages them to practice self-discipline. Elementary teachers use this practice frequently; middle years teachers could also benefit greatly from this procedure. For example: Many middle years discipline problems result from a lack of student understanding about how to be prepared for class. Teachers could prevent such problems by posting the procedures and needs for each class and having the students rehearse procedures until everyone has a clear understanding about what is expected.

3. Through avoiding criticism and offering positive feedback on desirable behaviours, teachers encourage students to practice self-discipline. Students learn much by observing and copying how adults behave. If

the adults in a student's life are negative and critical, the student is likely to become negative and critical.

- When teachers use praise meaningfully and relate it to the behaviours they wish to develop in students, they are assisting students in the development of self-discipline.

Students see teachers as important and powerful role models.

Student comment:

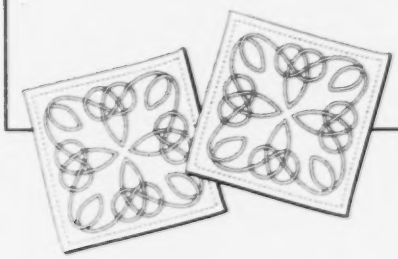
"I really admired Ms. Yee. She never asked us to do anything she wouldn't do herself. I learned more from her than just what was in the books."

"Children are still learning self-control skills; teachers are expected to have mastered that aspect of their lives" (Horne, Draper, & Sayger, 1994, p.122).

Give away what you want.

Teach & Model

1. Avoid double standards.
2. Clarify rules.
3. Be the person you would like them to be.
4. Provide meaningful feedback.

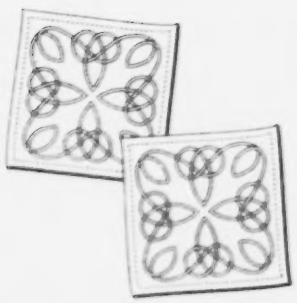


Positive Action

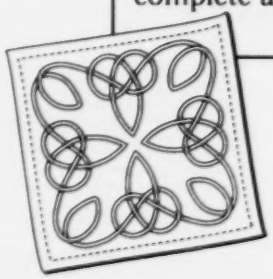
Strategies for Taking Positive Action with Discipline Problems

It is estimated that proactive classroom management strategies can prevent 75 percent of classroom discipline problems (Jones and Jones, 1986). Therefore, regardless of the number of preventative strategies which a teacher employs, discipline problems are likely to occur, from time to time, in even the most effective classroom. How does a teacher deal effectively and positively with student misbehaviour? There are a number of methods beginning with the development of a social contract and the establishment of fair and logical consequences as outlined earlier in this document.

- By recognizing the goal of the misbehaviour, teachers can respond to the misbehaviour with suggested intervention strategies and then having dealt with the misbehaviour, work toward establishing more positive interactions which build student self-esteem and self-discipline. Albert (1989) identifies four types of behaviour through which students choose to relate to teachers.

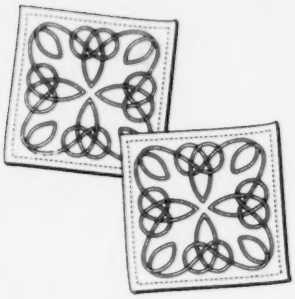


Student Behaviours	Recommended Teacher Interventions
Attention Seeking — i.e. pencil tapping, talking out of turn, asking irrelevant questions, coming in late.	Ignoring, standing close by, giving "the eye", mentioning the student's name while teaching, noticing appropriate behaviours.
Power Seeking — Active and Passive — i.e. lip, sass, or "young lawyer" syndrome usually delivered in front of an audience of peers.	Removing the audience, acknowledging student's power i.e. "I can't make you do this, but I can present some choices of behaviours and consequences to you."
Revenge Seeking —Active and Passive — student is hurtful to teacher or classmates or student is sullen and refuses overtures of friendship.	Agreeing to meet with a student later to discuss the problem. Using various forms of time-out. Setting consequences for the student.
Avoidance of Failure —Active and Passive — student loses control when the pressure to succeed becomes too intense or student procrastinates and fails to complete assignments.	Providing teacher and peer tutoring, teaching positive self-talk, legitimizing the making of mistakes, building confidence by focussing on improvement and recognizing achievement.



✦ **Recommended teacher reference**: Albert (1989) and Bennett and Smilanich (1994). Both references identify escalating sets of student behaviours which can be dealt with by prescriptive methods. Strategies for increasing student self-esteem are also included.

Caution!!! If there is a problem with prescriptive analysis, it is that teachers frequently use it as a method of gaining immediate control over students, rather than employing more proactive strategies which produce more self-directed behavioural changes in students and increased levels of student self-esteem. Hence, effective teachers know that prescriptive management techniques should be viewed as a stage and not as an end product.



- In dealing with and preventing student misbehaviour, teachers may also choose other approaches. Horne, Draper, & Sayger (1994) recommend:

  - Giving choices to students who are trying to move you toward a power struggle. For example: "Jane, you can either work quietly with the others at your table or you can choose to work alone at the back table. You decide. The choice is yours."

  - Using "I messages". Even if they do not always work, "I messages" model integrity, respect, and an attempt to communicate how you honestly feel. For example: "Curtis, I'm really happy to see you working cooperatively with your group members. Keep it up!"

  - Setting clear and firm boundaries around the important issues. Expect students to test the limits but know that students feel secure when limits are enforced.

  - Responding actively to the situation rather than lecturing the student about what should have been done. Say what you mean and mean what you say by providing an immediate consequence when misbehaviour occurs.

  - Employing pats on the back, smiles, and positive comments which focus on the effort instead of the product.

- Through effective teaching strategies, teachers may guide students toward social effectiveness, thereby both preventing and dealing with discipline problems. For example: Jackson, Jackson, & Monroe (1983) outline and demonstrate five effective and easily learned teaching strategies for elementary teachers. These include:

  - Positive Feedback — which is specific, immediate, and true. For example: "Billy, that's

Tips . . .

- ✓ Provide choices and options.
- ✓ Use "I messages".
- ✓ Set clear limits.
- ✓ Save lectures for more appropriate times.
- ✓ Make it clear you value effort.

really neat. You just cooperated with Shawn so that he could pour the juice."

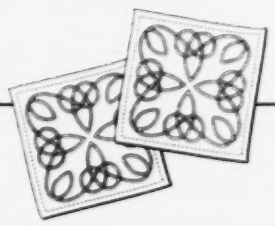
- Ignore - Attend - Praise — reinforces a student who is modelling appropriate behaviour and prompts another who is not to also model the desired behaviour. This technique focuses only on positive behaviour and is particularly useful for attention seeking behaviours because attention is given only for good behaviour. For example: "Jill, you're following my directions really well. You remembered to begin cleaning up right away and with a good attitude, too!" (Susan hears teacher praise Jill and begins to help, too.)

- Teaching Interacting — "is a positive intervention in a situation in which improvement is needed in an aspect of a child's social behaviour. It may be used to teach a new behavioural skill, strengthen the weak use of a skill, or deal with an inappropriate behaviour. The teacher interrupts the inappropriate behaviour in a positive way, asks the student to suggest another more positive behaviour (the teacher models or verbalizes the desired behaviour if the student cannot), and then requests the student to practice the new behaviour. Any improvement is supported with praise" (Jackson, Jackson, & Monroe, 1983, p.34).

- Direct Prompt — is a brief statement which tells the child what he or she should be doing and may be used when ignore - attend - praise has been unsuccessful. The prompt is delivered in a calm voice and with appropriate eye contact. A brief statement about the desired behaviour is made, the appropriate behaviour is watched for and then praised. For example: Teacher: (In a calm voice and with eye contact) "Tom, you need to keep your feet still and under the desk." (The child complies.) Teacher: "Very good! Now you have nice still feet, Tom."

Tips . . .

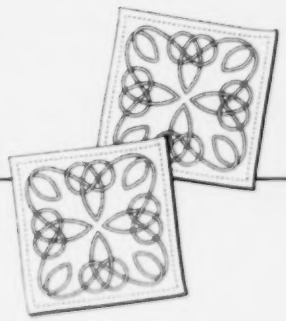
- ✓ Provide positive, specific, and immediate feedback.
- ✓ Focus on behaviours appropriate to the situation.
- ✓ Redirect attention.
- ✓ Consider "prompts" or quick, discreet reminders.
- ✓ Provide an opportunity for quiet space removed from the group.



Tips . . .

Might these work for you?

- ✓ Tie grades, in part, to classroom conduct?
- ✓ Use bonus points?
- ✓ Recognize positive behaviour?
- ✓ Ignore small "misdeeds"?
- ✓ Initiate natural and logical consequences?



- Sit and Watch — "is a technique for removing a child from participation when the child has in some way disrupted the group. The sit and watch procedure begins with calmly removing the child to a chair on the periphery of the room. The child must then sit quietly, maintain a good attitude, and watch how the other children in the group engage in appropriate behaviour" (Jackson, Jackson, & Monroe, 1983, p.48). The normal time of removal is no more than two minutes. This technique should not be used too often.

✦ **Recommended teacher reference**: Jackson, Jackson, & Monroe (1983). This source demonstrates how each interaction with a student is an opportunity to improve social behaviour through positive support and consequences.

- For middle and secondary students, Sprick (1981), (1985), and Sprick & Nolet (1991) recommend that a weekly grading system be constructed so that a passing grade is not only based upon academic performance but also on student effort and behaviour. When students know that their effort and behaviour contribute positively to their grade, there is a much greater chance of them exercising self-discipline. In many classrooms, it is sometimes thought that no matter how well low achieving students follow the rules, or complete assignments, they will still be unsuccessful. A student who continually experiences failure after trying to comply with a teacher's expectations has no incentive for behaving in the manner the teacher has requested. Depending on the need, award 1 to 20% of the grade for behaviour (Sprick and Nolet, 1991, p.526). Percentages allotted for behaviour will often be higher for middle years students where a major objective is to encourage and teach students to behave in ways which allow them to be socially and academically successful. Award or remove points objectively. Points may be taken away for tardiness, off-task behaviour, or lack of materials. Bonus points can be awarded for excellent or vastly improved behaviours or participation. Post the

students' behaviour points at least weekly and with "hard-to-teach" students acknowledge their progress two to four times per week.

- To improve student motivation and to proactively decrease behavioural problems, teach students how to track and follow their grades. Some students believe that the poor grades they receive are perpetrated against them by teachers. At the beginning of the term, give each student a form for each subject. As quizzes, assignments, or group projects, are given, have them place marks for behaviour and participation into their form. Require the students to keep their forms up to date. Each week place information on the board similar to the following:

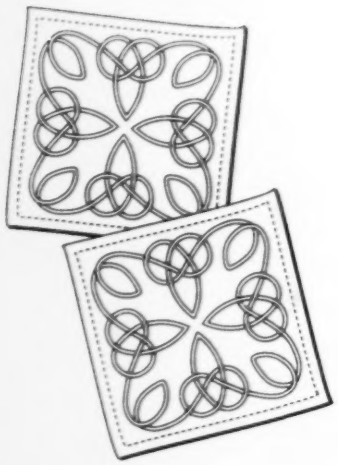
  185 - 215 = A 123 - 153 = C

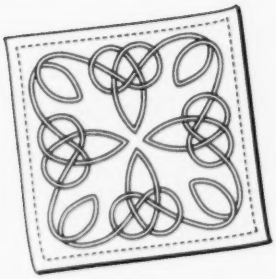
  154 - 184 = B 92 - 122 = D

  Fewer than 92, please come and see me.

- Along with the usual consequences for misbehaviour i.e. time owed, time after school, time-out in school or out of school, develop a concurrent place for success and recognize and reward positive social behaviour. Think about how to motivate students to choose positive behaviours. Develop a system of structured rewards for the students who have made a significant step toward success. For example: Younger students may receive stars, stickers, pencils, your attention, and older students may receive private teacher attention, a note sent to the student or parents, compliments in front of another staff member, a remark from the principal, or a new responsibility.

- Try to ignore minor misbehaviour for some students. For some children who exhibit behaviour problems, it may be prudent to focus on the important issues and not all minor





. . . decide which behaviours really are important to change.

infractions. If each small misdeed is highlighted, it can be counter-productive for both the student and the teacher. Therefore, decide which behaviours really are important to change and interact with students more frequently when they are behaving appropriately. Examples of interacting positively with a problem student include: greeting them as they enter the classroom, viewing their work while on task, inviting students to do odd jobs after good behaviour.

- As outlined earlier, develop natural and logical consequences for misbehaviour which are reasonable, related, and respectful. Remember: logical consequences are a part of a teacher's repertoire for dealing with misbehaviour but should not be the only option. For example: If you use time-out in your repertoire of consequences, ensure that it is used only to remove the child from a situation that is not going well, to give the student the opportunity to calm down, or to rethink an action.

✦ **Recommended teacher references**: Sprick (1981), (1985), and Sprick & Nolet (1991). These are very good references which emphasize that grades and their relationship to student behaviour should function as a reinforcement system and not as a tool for punishment. Good ideas for reinforcing positive student behaviours are given.

- Albert (1989) advises teachers to learn to avoid and to defuse serious confrontations with students by:

    - Focusing on the behaviour and not on the student. Try to describe the student's behaviour to the student objectively and avoid being judgemental. Do not say, "What you did was stupid!" Be firm yet friendly. "I still care about you, but what you are doing must stop right now."

    - Taking control of any negative emotions you may

have such as anger, frustration, or devastation. Signal to the student: "Sorry, but I'm not going to play this game!" Be sure to control your body language, too!

- Avoiding escalating the situation. Examples of escalating behaviours include: yelling, using sarcasm or physical force, making comparisons with the student's siblings or other students, attacking the student's character.

- Discussing misbehaviour later. Intervene in a firm yet friendly manner but save the discussion for later when both you and the student have cooled down.

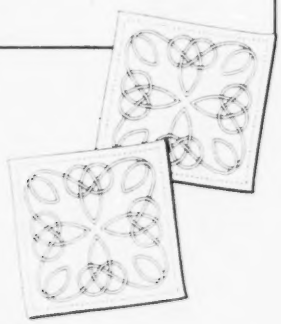
- Allowing the student to save face. This often means not challenging the muttering under the breath of a student after an intervention has occurred. Remember: Many people, including teachers, mutter under their breath if they disagree with something. Is it really worth escalating the conflict?

- Modelling nonaggressive behaviour. In spite of what you legitimately feel, stay cool — and count to 10 — and think! Know that in any confrontation, there must be one adult; make that person you!

Tips . . .

Avoid and defuse serious confrontations by . . .

- ✓ Being objective and specific.
- ✓ Focusing a behaviour.
- ✓ Keeping your own emotions in line.
- ✓ Discussing the situation later when things have calmed down.
- ✓ Leaving room for all parties to "save face".
- ✓ Modelling the behaviour you would like to encourage.



For Administrators

For Administrators

The following tips are offered to help support positive classroom environments.

- Know that in the development of a positive and caring school climate which endorses and promotes diversity there is no greater force than you.

- Encourage teachers to recognize the classroom as a diverse place and remind them that with student and teacher diversity comes strength. Model and profess this idea. Lead, encourage, and support teachers in their attempts to gain new knowledge and skills in dealing with students with special needs and from different cultural and racial backgrounds.

- Define clear limits for student behaviour before the standards of behaviour are violated. Clearly inform the students what these standards are and what will be the logical consequences of misbehaviour.

- Encourage staff members to discuss discipline problems and create a forum for this to occur. Dispel the notion that only "bad or incompetent" teachers have discipline problems. Build the notion that "We're all in this together!" Have the teachers work together to form a list of proactive strategies for preventing discipline problems and a list of reasonable and fair consequences.

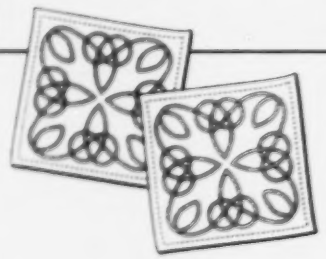
- Develop a school plan for discipline and seek consensus of all staff members on those rules which you feel are most important. Check the staff's degree of congruence regarding the school's discipline plan and its rules and consequences.

- Suggest strongly to teachers that, early in the school year, they present to you their classroom discipline plans including principles, procedures, rules, and

consequences. Carefully discuss with teachers those rules and consequences which you find unduly harsh or negative and will find difficulty in supporting. Do not back teacher rules with which you are uncomfortable.

Tips . . .

- ✓ Set clear limits.
- ✓ Model understanding.
- ✓ Celebrate diversity.
- ✓ Encourage discussion.
- ✓ Work together to develop a school plan.
- ✓ Discuss discipline plans.
- ✓ Clarify your role.
- ✓ Be an active listener.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for inservice.
- ✓ Check for student understanding of school rules.



- Clarify what your role will be if a student is sent to you and under which circumstances a teacher may send a student to you. By doing these things, you will be able to get a handle on teachers' styles of discipline, avoid any unpleasant surprises, and prevent yourself from being labelled by teachers as unsupportive.

- Know that a teacher's referral of a student to the office is more often an emotional rather than a rational response (Curwin and Mendler, 1988, p.92). Hence, be a good listener to the beleaguered teacher; it is often enough. As well, listen to the student's side of the issue. Encourage teachers and students to solve their own problems but be prepared to offer your services as a mediator if a student-teacher solution is impossible.

- Set the tone for the school by having clear and consistent rules which are enforced without fear of reactions by staff, students, or parents. Examine the school's rules and consequences to ensure that they are clear, specific, fair, and provide for a range of alternatives and choices.

- As a deterrent to discipline problems, coach teachers or provide inservice on the topics of congruence and miscalls. With reference to congruence, help teachers to find out "who they are" and to develop consequences they will enforce.

- Assess the students' knowledge of the school's rules and procedures. If this is low, re-explain the rules and procedures and reassess.

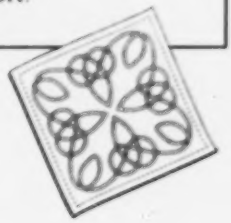
- Inform all parents about the school's rules and consequences and encourage all teachers to do the same.

- Involve parents in dealing with disruptive students. Do not be afraid to call parents at home or at work.

- Provide teachers with a list of consequences which have been effective with various difficult students and let teachers know that you will support them if a student refuses to accept a consequence. Remember that a major complaint of teachers is a feeling of a lack of administrative support with discipline problems.

Tips . . .

- ✓ Involve and inform parents.
- ✓ Acknowledge stress and deal with it.
- ✓ Listen.
- ✓ Keep in touch with teachers.
- ✓ Show appreciation.
- ✓ Celebrate growth.
- ✓ Be creative.
- ✓ Support and commend innovators.
- ✓ Foster "success".
- ✓ Initiate joint student/staff projects.
- ✓ Encourage and support.



- Know that for teachers and administrators stress in dealing with student discipline is a part of the job. Encourage teachers to recognize stress and to locate strategies for dealing with it. Take care of your own stress. If you are exhibiting features of stress or burnout, it is difficult to help others.

- Listen to teachers and allow them to talk to you about problems.

- Motivate staff to become better classroom managers by placing appreciative notes into their mailboxes.

- In cases where trouble is likely to occur, be visible throughout the school.

- Actively follow up any problems with a disruptive student. Avoid an, "I'll do it tomorrow attitude." Teachers will respect you for this!

- Encourage teachers to develop and use creative strategies in dealing with difficult students.

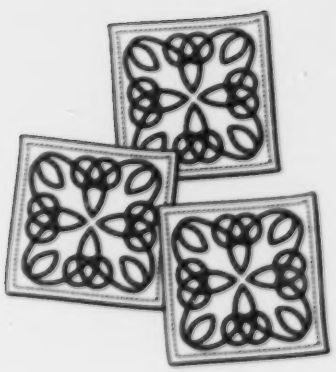
- Stress the relationship between effective teaching, positive interaction, and improved student behaviour. Encourage staff to bring innovation, a positive attitude, and change into their content, teaching strategies, and relationships with students. Model this by supporting and commending innovators.

- Encourage teachers to develop effective methods for increasing student achievement while decreasing discipline problems.

- Seek ways to involve both students and staff in special projects that build relationships between the two groups. Involved students and staff result in fewer problems.

- Know that encouragement and support of both students and staff will make a significant and positive difference!

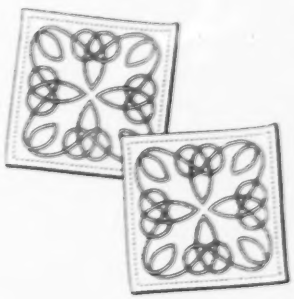
Source: Adapted from Curwin and Mendler (1988).



Summary

Summary

The social milieu surrounding today's students presents teachers with a unique set of challenges. In order to meet the wide range of needs found in the diverse classroom, teachers must adopt proactive strategies and behaviours which support the development of a positive and democratic classroom climate. By maximizing the number of positive interactions with students, by working cooperatively with students and parents, and by effectively modelling the processes, skills, and attitudes they teach, teachers are capable of producing profound and positive changes in students' behaviours and learning.



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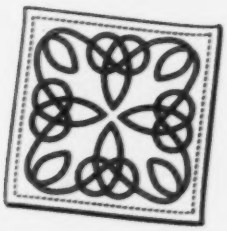

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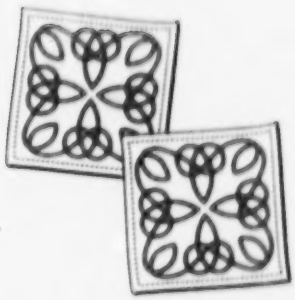

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